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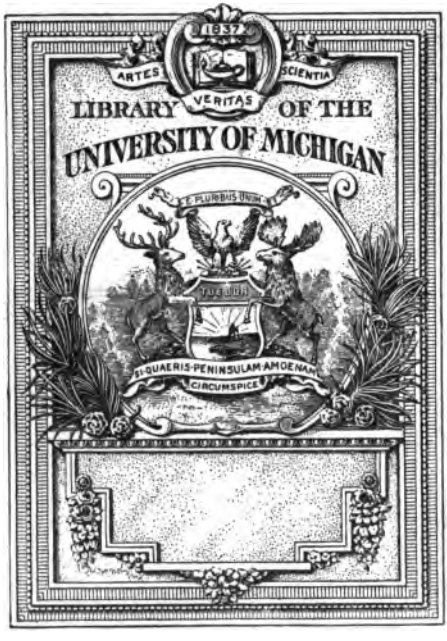

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WILD EDEN

The MMCo.

WILD EDEN

BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	He ate the Laurel and is Mad . .	1
II.	Flower before the Leaf . . .	7
III.	Wild Eden	10
IV.	The Birth of Love	14
V.	"When first I saw her" . . .	15
VI.	The Secret	16
VII.	"O, inexpressible as sweet" . .	17
VIII.	The Sea-Shell	18
IX.	The Rose of Stars	20
X.	The Rose Bower	22
XI.	The Message	25
XII.	The Rose	26
XIII.	The Lover	28
XIV.	The Weather-Spirit	30
XV.	Love's Castaway	31
XVI.	Divine Awe	33
XVII.	Wind and Wave	34
XVIII.	Farewell	35
XIX.	The Wanderers	36

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		PAGE
XX.	"Now marble Apennines shining" .	37
XXI.	"I see the warm sun parting" .	38
XXII.	Love Delayed	39
XXIII.	Love's Confessional . . .	41
XXIV.	Going North	43
XXV.	Homeward Bound . . .	45
XXVI.	The Homestead	47
XXVII.	The Lindens	49
XXVIII.	The Bat	50
XXIX.	The Humming Bird . . .	55
XXX.	The Child	58
XXXI.	Love's Birthright	60
XXXII.	"From the young orchards" .	62
XXXIII.	"O, struck beneath the laurel" .	64
XXXIV.	The Dream	65
XXXV.	Nevada	68
XXXVI.	The Mighty Mother . . .	69
XXXVII.	Autumn	75
XXXVIII.	So Slow to Die	76
XXXIX.	Eden Dirge	78
XL.	The Blood-red Blossom . .	80
XLI.	Seaward	85

WILD EDEN

WILD EDEN

I

He ate the Laurel and is Mad

Is it a dream that the world is fair?
And the voice in my blood's melodious beat,—
Is it only in dreams heard smooth and fleet?
Lightly singing, "Somewhere, somewhere,
There is one who shall make thy whole life sweet,
Making all beautiful things complete
With the fairest of things found fair!"

I drank at dawn the Muses' breath;
In boyhood's blossom and flood

I bit the laurel; I know till death
Its poison will flow in my blood.
Into my speech a glory slips;
A throbbing pains my side;
One is the breath of the Muses' lips;
One is the laurel — woe betide!
All day my perilous pulses keep
A music sweeter than the spheres;
All day, all night, heart-high they leap,
They witch my eyes with hopes and fears.
I bit the laurel so deep, so deep,
That every lovely thing appears
A spirit clad in maidenhood, —
The glamour flies with Dian's foot,
And music rushes through the wood.
So long I ate Apollo's root,
There shooteth through me, blood and brain,
A burning bliss, by day, by night, —
Here — there — her face! — if love be pain,
'Tis pain exceeding all delight!
For who the laurel-madness hath

Shall hold the vision-haunted path,
Searching with song the whole world through,
Where spreads the green, where rolls the blue.
A maiden draws me, feet and eyes,
The way by happy lovers ranged;
And, maiden-touched, my sweet youth dies
To sweeter manhood, maiden-changed.
Though I be mad, I shall not wake;
I shall not fall to common sight;
Only the god himself may take
This music out of my blood, this glory out of my breath,
This lift, this rapture, this singing might,
And love that outlasts death.

I shall go singing, blood and brain,
I shall make music of voice and lyre,
Triumphs of sorrow, pæans of pain,
And at every fall shall the song leap higher;

Whether through Love victorious made,
Or in his victories victim-laid,
Him will I praise, whatever fates are,
On my lips the flower, in my eyes the star,
My heart his passion, my soul his flame,—
Love, our divine and intimate lord,
Who out of the infinite, all-adored,
Into the heart of nature came,
With splendor of ten million suns;
And instant back his longing runs
Through bud and billow, through drift and blaze,
Through thought, through prayer, the thousand ways
The spirit journeys from despair;
He sees all things that they are fair,
But feels them as the daisied sod,—
This slumbrous beauty, this light, this room,
The chrysalis and broken tomb
He cleaveth on his way to God.

I shall go singing over-seas:
"The million years of the planet's increase,
All pangs of death, all cries of birth,
Are clasped at one by the heart of earth."

I shall go singing by tower and town:
"The thousand cities of men that crown
Empire slow-rising from horde and clan
Are clasped at one by the heart of man."

I shall go singing by flower and brier:
"The multitudinous stars of fire,
And man made infinite under the sod,
Are clasped at one by the heart of God."

I shall go singing up ice and snow:
"Blow soon, dread angel, greatly blow,
Break up, ye gulfs, beneath, above,
Peal, time's last music,—'love, love, love'!"

And wheresoever my feet shall rest,
The place shall be named of the lovers' guest;

And where in the night I journey on,
The place shall be called of the lover gone;
My life shall be as a sweet song sung,
My death as a knell by maidens rung,
Lightly singing, "Somewhere, somewhere,
There is one to make thy whole life sweet,
Making all beautiful things complete
With the fairest of things found fair!"
And before the silence wholly fall,
Faintly shall soft echoes call,
Syllabling some heavenly air,
As if my spirit lingered there —
"Found fair — found fair — found fair!"

II

Flower before the Leaf

I

Flower before the leaf, boy-loved Rhodora,
Morning-pink along the valley of the birch and maple;
Now the green begins to cling about the silver birches,
Burst the maple buds and ruddy yonder hillside;
Sudden as the babbling brook or robin's whistle,
Spring-swift, thou art come in the old places,
In the hollow swamp-land, bloom on brake!

Flower before the leaf!
Ah, once here in the sweet season —

Flash of blue wings, birds in chorus,
Ere the violet, ere the wild-rose,
While the linden lingered and the elm tree —
Years ago a boy's heart broke in blossom,
Flower before the leaf,
While he wandered down the valley loving you;
And above him, and around him,
Beam and gleam and distant color,
Waiting, waiting, hung the Spirit
To rush forth upon the world.

II

Somewhere in the years of the dawn did I dream that a youth all boy-like stands? —
And the tender Rhodora's bloom, the first of the year, is red in his pure, sweet hands;
And in the doorway bending, dark-haired, bright-cheeked, a girlish form appears, —

A word, a smile, a blush, and out of the
blue a black bird downward steers,—
And all the spirits rush to his heart, and
the fragrant world, save her, turns
dim,
The flowering of whose face was the glory
of spring through the years of the
dawn to him!

III

Wild Eden

THERE is a garden enclosed
  In the high places,
But never hath love reposed
  In its bowery spaces;
And the cedars there like shadows
  O'er the moonlit champaign stand
  Till light like an angel's hand
    Touches Wild Eden.

Who told me the name of the garden
  That lieth remote, apart,
I know not, nor whence was the music
  That sang it into my heart;
But just as the loud robin tosses
  His notes from the elm-tops high,
As the violets come in the mosses
  When south-winds wake and sigh,

So on my lips I found it,
  This name that is made my cry.

There, under the stars and the dawns
  Of the virginal valleys,
White lilies flood the low lawns
  And the rose lights the alleys;
But never are heard there the voices
  That sweeten on lovers' lips,
  And the wild bee never sips
    Sweets of Wild Eden.

But who hath shown me the vision
  Of the roses and lilies in ranks
I would that I knew, that forever
  To him I might render thanks;
For a maiden grows there in her blossom,
  In the place of her maidenhood,
Nor knows how her virgin bosom
  Is stored with the giving of good,
For the truth is hidden from her
  That of love is understood.

No bird with his mate there hovers,
Nor beside her has trilled or sung;
No bird in the dewy covers
Has built a nest for his young;
And over the dark-leaved mountains
The voice in the laurel sleeps;
And the moon broods on the deeps
Shut in Wild Eden.

O Love, if thou in thy hiding
Art he who above me stands,
If thou givest wings to my spirit,
If thou art my heart and my hands,—
Through the morn, through the noon, through the even
That burns with thy planet of light,
Through the moonlit space of heaven,
Guide thou my flight
Till, star-like on the dark garden,
I fall in the night!

ENVOY

Fly, song of my bosom, unto it
  Wherever the earth breathes spring;
Though a thousand years were to rue it,
  Such a heart beats under thy wing,
Thou shalt dive, thou shalt soar, thou
    shalt find it,
  And forever my life be blest,
  Such a heart beats in my breast,—
    Fly to Wild Eden!

IV

The Birth of Love

'Tis joy to feel the spirit leap
Angelic from its childhood sleep,
Pure as a star, fair as a flower,
Eager with youth's unblasted power;
Where every sense gives soft consent,
To burst into love's element;
To be all touch, all eye, all ear,
And pass into love's burning sphere.

V

"When first I saw her"

When first I saw her, at the stroke
The heart of nature in me spoke;
The very landscape smiled more sweet,
Lit by her eyes, pressed by her feet;
She made the stars of heaven more bright
By sleeping under them at night;
And fairer made the flowers of May
By being lovelier than they.

Softly down where the sunshine spread,
Dark in the grass I laid my head;
And let the lights of earth depart
To find her image in my heart;
While through my being came and went
Tones of some heavenly instrument,
As if where its blind motions roll
This world should wake and be a soul.

VI

The Secret

NIGHTINGALES warble about it
All night under blossom and star;
The wild swan is dying without it,
And the eagle crieth afar;
The sun, he doth mount but to find it,
Searching the green earth o'er;
But more doth a man's heart mind it—
O more, more, more!

Over the gray leagues of ocean
The infinite yearneth alone;
The forests with wandering emotion
The thing they know not intone;
Creation arose but to see it,
A million lamps in the blue;
But a lover, he shall be it,
If one sweet maid is true.

VII

"O, Inexpressible as Sweet"

O, INEXPRESSIBLE as sweet,
Love takes my voice away;
I cannot tell thee when we meet
What most I long to say.

But hadst thou hearing in thy heart
To know what beats in mine,
Then shouldst thou walk, where'er thou art,
In melodies divine.

So warbling birds lift higher notes
Than to our ears belong;
The music fills their throbbing throats,
But silence steals the song.

VIII

The Sea-Shell

My love o'erflows with joy divine
The ocean-girdled hills;
And with my breath each blowing pine
And combing breaker fills;
The shadows of my spirit move
The far, blue coast along,
Where of wild beauty first I wove
The rainbow woof of song;
On these great beaches of the North
My voices shoreward roll,
And when the blesséd stars come forth,
All heaven is made my scroll.

I take the wings of morn; I soar
Above the ocean plain;
From fountains of the sun I pour
My passion's golden rain;

And when black tempest heaven shrouds,
On eastern thunders far
I show the rainbow in the clouds,
And give the West her star;
Soft blow the winds o'er fallen showers,
And, cool with fragrance, sleep
Lies breathing through the chambered hours;
I only wake and weep.

O mystic Love! that so can take
The bright world in thy hands,
And its imprisoned spirits make
Murmur at thy commands;
As if, in truth, this orb of law
Were but thy reed-hung nest,
Woven by Time of sticks and straw
To house the summer guest;
And so to me the starry sphere
Is but love's frail sea-shell;
O, might she press it to her ear,
What would its murmurs tell!

IX

The Rose of Stars

When Love, our great Immortal,
Put on mortality,
And down from Eden's portal
Brought this sweet life to be,
At the sublime archangel
He laughed with veiléd eyes,
For he bore within his bosom
The seed of Paradise.

He hid it in his bosom,
And there such warmth it found,
It brake in bud and blossom,
And the rose fell on the ground
As the green light on the prairie,
As the red light on the sea,
Through fragrant belts of summer
Came this sweet life to be.

And the grave archangel seeing
Spread his mighty wings for flight,
But the glow hung round him fleeing
Like the rose of an Arctic night;
And sadly moving heavenward
By Venus and by Mars,
He heard the joyful planets
Hail Earth, the Rose of Stars.

X

The Rose Bower

A CRIMSON bower the garden glows,
In overhanging noon, intense and bare,
Enisled and bathed in silence and repose,
As it were mirrored on the azure air;
All molten lies the faint blue-shimmering deep,
Impalpably transparent, smooth with light;
Far in the fragrant pines the hot winds sleep;
And nothing moves, and all dark things are bright.
Yet is this fair round of tranquillity,
This swathe of color, wheresoe'er it be,
The burning shell of elemental strife;
And never yet so fleeting seemed sweet life;
So fragile this thin film of human eyes,

In whose slight orb are springtime and sunrise;
So perishable this incandescent frame,
Lone Nature's inextinguishable pyre
Of transitory loveliness and bliss,—
This undulating and eternal flame
Of beauty burning in its perfumed fire,
And passion dying in its tropic kiss.

Even now the sweet-hued vision sinks away,
And from these bathing flames of night and day,
As in my hour to come it soon may seem
When fades to ashes earth's majestic dream,
My soul springs up erect, alone, supreme,
And, passing from this glory, doth survey,
As some spent meteor's low and dying gleam,
This radiant life that burns all else away,
Consuming its own star; a moment, where
About my feet morning and evening flare,

My spirit gazes, still a stranger there,
On this dear human home, so sweet, so fair,
Not yet unfolds aloft eternal wings.
Then slowly lapsing into sensuous things,
Once more do I inhale this glorious light,
Breathe the soft air and feel the flowering earth,
And on me comes the everlasting sea,
Purple horizons, emerald-hanging woods,
The rose bower, and love's blissful solitudes,
Where voices of eternity
Have wandered from my birth,
And nothing save love's mystery
Shines with immortal worth.

XI

The Message

So fair the world about me lies,
So pure is heaven above,
Ere so much beauty dies
I would give a gift to my love;
Now, ere the long day close,
That has been so full of bliss,
I will send to my love the rose,
In its leaves I will shut a kiss;
A rose in the night to perish,
A kiss through life to cherish;
Now, ere the night-wind blows,
I will send unto her the rose.

XII

The Rose

O LOVE's star over Eden,
How pale and faint thou art!
Now lost, now seen above,
Thy white rays point and dart.
O, liquid o'er her move,
Shine out and take my part!
I have sent her the rose of love,
And shut in the rose is my heart.

The fireflies glitter and rush
In the dark of the summer mead;
Pale on the hawthorn bush,
Bright on the larkspur seed;
And long is heaven aflush
To give my rose god-speed;
If she breathe a kiss, it will blush;
If she bruise a leaf, it will bleed.

O bright star over Eden,
All beautiful thou art;
To-day, in the rose, the rose,
For my love I have perilled my heart;
Now, ere the dying glows
From the placid isles depart,
The rose-bathed planet knows
It is hers, my rose, my heart!

XIII

The Lover

Come down, my love, from Eden,
For there all things decay,
Since in his youthful bosom
Love bore the seed away;
Now leave the loveless garden,
And I will be thy guide
To that world where thy lover
Shall never leave thy side.

Come, love; in that new country
The rose shall be thy part,
And many a darling blossom
Shall press against thy heart;
In a lily whiter, sweeter
Love shall treasure up thy gold;
Lily and rose together
Thou to thy breast shalt fold.

Come, love; my heart is burning
To reach unto thy hand;
Come, love; my soul is yearning
For that mystical new land;
Now where thy eyes are bending
Mayst thou thy lover see
Midway the height ascending
That leadeth up to thee.

XIV

The Weather-Spirit

A voice in the roaring pine-wood,
A voice in the breaking sea,
A voice in the storm-red morning,
That will not let me be.

It is calling me to the forest,
It is calling me to the strand,
The Weather-Spirit is calling me
To fare over sea and land.

Till my cheek with the rain is stinging,
And my hand is wet with the spray,
There is that within my bosom
Which will not let me stay.

Might in the pine-wood tossing,
Might on the racing sea,
The Weather-Spirit, my brother,
Is calling, calling, to me.

XV.

Love's Castaway

On isle and crag the wild-rose blooms
  Above the purple wave;
Its lonely beauty lights the glooms
  Of many a sailor-grave.
Sad thought! but oft the ocean-strain,
  That wanders in my blood,
Works in the meditative brain
  Some wild mysterious mood;
I leave the summer's pine-soft track;
  From all of earth I flee;
And on dark tides my soul turns back
  And draws to the deep sea;
And oft this flower of wilding song,
  That on the gray crag grew,
Amid the sea-winds safe from wrong,
  And fed with rain and dew,

Seems but the wild-rose of the rock
That brightens day by day,
And there outlives the tempest's shock
To mourn the castaway.

Ah, if where then the blue sea grieves
I lie beneath the rose,
My love will live in its lone leaves
After a thousand snows;
And every crag that sees it blush
Will with my love-note ring,
While every bird within the bush
Pours this immortal spring;
And each brown league of this salt spray
Shall lift my shrill sea-cry,
Where here above love's castaway
The ocean billows lie.

XVI

Divine Awe

To tremble, when I touch her hands,
With awe that no man understands;
To feel soft reverence arise
When, lover-sweet, I meet her eyes;
To see her beauty grow and shine
When most I feel this awe divine, —
Whate'er befall me, this is mine;
And where about the room she moves,
My spirit follows her, and loves.

XVII

Wind and Wave

Why wilt thou make, O Wave,
  Forever in from the bay?
Dost thou seek on the beaches' grave
  To cast thy life away?

Why wilt thou blow, O Wind,
  Forever out to sea?
Is it death thou, too, wouldst find,
  O winged eternity?

I told my love unsped
  To both in the eventide;
The wild Wind moaned, and fled;
  The wild Wave sobbed, and died.

XVIII

Farewell

O SNOW-WHITE birds aye calling me,
And must I say farewell;
And past the coasts of mystery
Follow the dark sea-swell?

This shore was all the world to me;
And if I say farewell,
Its vague and murmuring minstrelsy
Shall house in my sea-shell.

And thou, sea-rose, forget not me,
Though now I say farewell;
And where I lie, afar from thee,
To those who love me tell.

But, O Wild Eden, not to thee,
O, not to thee farewell;
Nor can the heart of Italy
Vie with thy maiden-spell!

XIX

The Wanderers

The ocean, storming on the rocks,
Shepherds not there his wild, wet flocks;
The soaring aether nowhere finds
An eyrie for the wingéd winds;
Nor has yon glittering sky a charm
To hive in heaven the starry swarm;
And so thy wandering thoughts, my heart,
No home shall find; let them depart!

XX

"Now Marble Apennines Shining"

Now marble Apennines shining
  Should breathe my spirit bare;
My heart should cease repining
  In the rainbow-haunted air;
But cureless sorrow carries
  My heart beyond the sea,
Nor comfort in it tarries
  Save thoughts of thee.

The branch of olive shaken
  Silvers the azure sea;
Winds in the ilex waken;
  O, wert thou here with me,
Gray olive, dark ilex, bright ocean,
  The radiant mountains round,
Never for love's devotion
  Were sweeter lodging found!

XXI

"I see the Warm Sun Parting"

I SEE the warm sun parting
From all sweet things that be;
The orange now regrets him,
With the rose in company;
And faintly flushing darkens
The blossomed almond-tree;
In every kiss he taketh
I seem to part from thee.

Dark lifts the palm-tree yonder
Its sharp spines on the west.
O doth the birch now waken
And whisper of thy guest?
O white birch, when stars cover
The bird within thy nest,
Dost thou sigh near her bosom
The longing of my breast?

XXII

Love Delayed

THE star that most is mine once did I see;
No cloud there was; only the reddened air
Bloomed round it where it smiled, all bright and fair;
Then most of all love seemed divine to me.
So pure it shone I could but think of thee;
So rosily enclasped, yet more must dare;
"So dost thou shine, my love," nor could forbear,
"So soft my passion folds thy purity!"

But now I see the western star all gold
Hang o'er the high and gloomy Apennine;

And there I read my lot more truly told —
The night, the penance, the far journey mine!
Still be thou bright! — My heart, all dark and cold,
Suffers no light save what from thee doth shine.

XXIII

Love's Confessional

Only the lily shall shrive me
  Of my passion and my pain;
Only the rose shall revive me
  From death unto life again.
    O lily, white to see,
    O rose of mystery,
      Hear me confess!

I was a lover from birth,—
  Flower of the earth!
Love's thoughts were mine from a boy,—
  Flower of love's joy!
Love's words were mine through youth,—
  Flower of love's truth!
Love's deeds were mine, man-grown,—
  Flower of love's throne!
Thoughts, words, deeds, were his,—
  Flower of one bliss!

I was a lover from birth,—
  Flower of the earth!
My thoughts were love's from a boy,—
  Desire, not joy!
My words were love's through youth,—
  Prayer, not truth!
My deeds were love's, man-grown,—
  Defeat, not his throne!
Thoughts, words, deeds, were his,—
  Pain, not bliss!

From my thoughts in which love sighs,
From my words in which love cries,
From my deeds in which love dies,
  White lily, shrive me!
With love's thoughts wherefrom joy springs,
With love's words wherein truth sings,
With love's deeds wherewith heaven rings,
  My rose, revive me!

XXIV

Going North

Ice-gorge and mountain snow,
And ere my steps depart,
The avalanche will leap and go
Into the glacier's heart.

Ice-cave and rainbow-quiver,
And blue from the glacier's mouth
The rushing river, with chill and shiver,
Glides into the warméd South.

The sun-tide sets to furthest North,
And ere my steps arrive,
The fields aflood, and the willow forth,
And the thawed bees leave the hive.

Spring, with the almond-blossom wing
Brushing the Alpine snows,
Wing and wing, fly with me, Spring,
Till the Arctic be all one rose;

And all that is cold and frozen be gone,
  And the icebergs melt in the sea;
Till the blushing maid be kissed and won,
  And her cold heart melt in me!

XXV

Homeward Bound

I

Into the west of the waters on the living ocean's foam,
Into the west of the sunset where the young adventurers roam,
Into the west of the shining star, I am sailing, sailing home;
Home from the lonely cities, time's wreck, and the naked woe,
Home through the clean great waters where freemen's pennants blow,
Home to the land men dream of, where all the nations go;
'Tis home but to be on the waters, 'tis home already here,
Through the weird red-billowing sunset into the west to steer,

To fall to sleep in the rocking dark with
home a day more near.

II

By morning light the ship holds on, alive
with happy freight,
A thousand hearts with one still joy, and
with one hope elate,
To reach the land that mothered them
and sweetly guides their fate;
Whether the purple furrow heaps the bows
with dazzling spray,
Or buried in green-based masses they dip
the storm-swept day,
Or the white fog ribbons o'er them, the
strong ship holds her way;
And when another day is done, by the
star of love we steer
To the land of all that we love best and
all that we hold dear;
We are sailing westward, homeward; our
western home is near.

XXVI

The Homestead

In the high field I used to know
Where earliest the violets grow,
I found three, faithful to the rock,
The firstlings of the azure flock.

The sun-warmed ground, the soft salt air,
Seemed still of boyhood lingering there;
The sea-blown homestead of my race,—
What feelings filled the sacred place!

I found in tears 'tis memory gives
The immortal part by which man lives;
And every flower I ponder on
Grows in a world of beauty gone.

Full many a spring of buried bloom
From these faint violets sheds perfume;
And all the summers of the sun
My love remembers, shine as one.

Ye hills, ye woods my boyhood knew,
Be now my manhood dear to you!
And fairer may I ye behold
Year after year, as I grow old.

XXVII

The Lindens

Bees in the lindens booming
  In the green core, out of sight,
In the lindens, yellow-blooming,
  Embosomed close as night;
And nought is there to see
  Save the mellow emerald's bright
Deep-foliaged lucidity
  Of music, bloom, and light.

Bees in the lindens humming
  Melody three days old,
"Midsummer coming, coming,
  Autumn, and winter, the cold!"
The green core ringing is,
  Rings the tiny blossomed gold,
The lindens ring with bliss
  In three days told.

XXVIII

The Bat

One rich hollyhock warden,
High in the midsummer garden,
Motionless points its blossoming spear
Up to the honey-pale, amber-clear
Dome of the golden atmosphere,
Shut aloft by the foliage-wall,
Linden, rock-maple, elms over all,
Embowering, umbrageous, massive, tall,
That make of the garden a little dell,
A place of slumber for blade and bell, —
Of sleep and circumambient peace,
From the crimson hollyhock's flowered spire
To the one deep rose-plume drifting fire,
Where, duskily seen as the shades increase,
Mid molten flakes of breaking fleece,
And trellised with many a fading spark,
Through her summer-lattice peers the dark.

Midsummer now, and the black bat come
Who makes of the garden his dim night-home;
Familiar to me from boyhood's year
That gave me mated first-love, first-fear;
And before the wings of darkness seize
The blackening boughs, he is flitting there,
Lightly silhouetting the air,
In the hollow gulf of the trees;
Swooping, careening, never alight,
Swerving, turning, in involute flight,
High and far on the elm's black edge,
Low in the clefts of the evergreen hedge;
Never long come, never quite gone,
With poise and waver he circles on,
Darts and doubles and disappears,
And blurs on the eaves with gyres and veers;
And ever I watch with charméd eyes
The noiseless shadow where it flies,
The strange lone guest of the branchéd gloom,

Weaving over the garden in bloom
In the silence and darkness of the night
His great gray loops of flight.

O'er summers many the flower-mould lies,
Since first, with night-awakened eyes,
I hunt the dark where the shadow flies;
Midsummers many the woven charm,
Weirdly weaving, wrought in me
Phantoms of fore-felt misery;
Now many a year and many a grief
Lie buried under the yellow leaf;
And the garden now were scarce the same
Unless the friendless creature came,
My shadow-playmate of long past time,
Where lonesome thought and darksome hour
Hung over the midsummer in flower,
Ere the sun-tide ebbed from the northern clime,
And the chill of the year made into the bower.

Dark comrade of the vanished prime,
Dark omen of misfortune near,
The past, the future, dark appear
Beneath his ever-falling rings.
But O, may never come hurt nor harm
To the least little tender film of his hunch-
back wings!
Something to me the black bat brings
I should miss were he never to come
again,
The prisoner of this nighted frame;
Nor now were life without death dear,
Earth without sorrow, love without pain,
And scarce this human heart the same
Unvisited by fear.

Midnight now, and my song-in-bloom,
Like the night-hid hollyhock, lifts its spear
From the master-soul, past beauty, past
gloom,
To the midsummer midnight majestic,
clear,—

And the far roll of the sea I hear;
And the black bat flits a mote obscure
In the song where star and sea endure.

O black bat, what were thy omen true?—
My day hath the garden, my night hath
you.

XXIX

The Humming Bird

Bird in the flower,
Blossom-spirit,
Whose tiny power
Doth the rainbow inherit,
A breathless minute
Flower-like in it
Hang in the flower.

Ruby-throat rover
Of noon's blue hour,
Making music so sphere-like
Only silence can hear it,
Sung to the flower;
Faëry resonance clear, like
The garden's bell-tower
Heard through the bower.

Larkspur-lover,
Deep in the flower,
With secret blisses,
Aërial kisses,
Over and over;
Swift goer, swift comer,
Heart of the summer
A-wing on the flower.

Could heart discover
Thy love-fast power,
So near to hover,
So close to love her,
Deep in the flower,
With hid blisses
And silent kisses,
O, it were heaven
To be such a lover!

How should she fear it,
The rainbow spirit,
Nor love to be near it,
Flower-like immure it,

Love in life's flower;
Feed it and lure it,
The ruby rover,
One golden hour,
And over and over,
Home to her bower!

Love, the song-spirit,
Alone to hear it
There in her bower;
Bright-bodied above her,
Hark, the true lover!
What passion he sings,
The sphere's own music
From the heart-strings! —
Art thou gone, swift wings,
The bird from the flower?

XXX

The Child

It was only the clinging touch
Of a child's hand in the street,
But it made the whole day sweet;
Caught, as he ran full-speed,
In my own stretched out to his need,
Caught, and saved from the fall,
As I held, for the moment's poise,
In my circling arms the whole boy's
Delicate slightness, warméd mould;
Mine, for an instant mine,
The sweetest thing the heart can divine,
More precious than fame or gold,
The crown of many joys,
Lay in my breast, all mine.

I was nothing to him;
He neither looked up nor spoke;

I never saw his eyes;
He was gone ere my mind awoke
From the action's quick surprise
With vision blurred and dim.

You say I ask too much:
It was only the clinging touch
Of a child in a city street;
It hath made the whole day sweet.

XXXI

Love's Birthright

To take the life, and stay the stream thereof;
To be the flower but not the seed of love;
The voice, but not the heaven-homing
song;
The instrument, but not what doth belong
Unto the instrument as song to breath,
Its utterance of the chords of life and death,
The music born of it, its own soul-birth,—
This is to make thy body bankrupt earth,
And in thy soul annul the law divine,
For in the blood-tie love doth holiest
shine;
And life from life, to give and to receive,
For mortals is love's true prerogative;
His sacred power lies there; thence flows
his grace
Diffused and deathless in a dying race,

And ever building, out of touch and sight,
The immortal world, with all we worship
bright;
O, ponder this, before death to thee come,
And childless eld, — no hand to lead thee
home.

XXXII

"From the young orchards"

From the young orchards, thick with rosy spray,
Falls in the windless night the wreath of May;
And the young maples, fresh with early gold,
In one slow moon their emerald globes unfold;
So grows, through happy change, the tree of life.

The sweet arbutus to the violet yields;
Soon the wild daisies flood the fluttering fields;
And last the cardinal and the golden-rod
Lift to the blue the soft fire of the sod;
So moves, from bloom to bloom, the flower of love.

O, hidden-strange as on dew-heavy lawns
The warm dark scents of summer-fragrant dawns;
O, tender as the faint sea-changes are,
When grows the flush and pales the snow-white star;
So strange, so tender, to a maid is love.

O, calling as the touch of children's hands,
That draw all wanderers home o'er seas and lands;
O, answering far as from the world divine,
Whence unseen hands through Time and Space touch mine;
So in my breast I hear the voice of love.

The Eden-heart of this majestic frame,
God's will on earth, and flame within the flame
Far as yon suns in Nature's mystic dusks,
Deep as the life whereof our lives are husks —
Unspeakable, O love, my love, is love.

XXXIII

"O, struck beneath the laurel"

O, STRUCK beneath the laurel, where the
singing fountains are,
I saw from heaven falling the star of love
afar;
O, slain in Eden's bower nigh the bourn
where lovers rest,
I fell upon the arrow that was buried in my
breast;
Farewell the noble labor, farewell the silent
pain,
Farewell the perfect honor of the long years
lived in vain;
I lie upon the moorland where the wood
and pasture meet,
And the cords that no man breaketh are
bound about my feet.

XXXIV

The Dream

Was it April I heard sighing,
Was it May I heard replying,
In the time when love lay dying,
  True love, so slow to die?

Was it April I saw mingling
With the sea-fog, white and chill,
Leave the ruddy maples tingling,
And the green mist on the hill;
Come fire-shod through the furrow,
And fleeting through the boughs,
While many a golden morrow
Streamed backward from her brows?
Did I hear her breathing nigh
Where the wet, bright grasses grow,
And the oriole passes by,
In moist places, warm and low,

Till I dreamed the dream before me
In the dreaming of the year,
And I dreamed her breath stole o'er me,
Sighing low, "Would May were here!"

Swelled the bud and closed the furrow;
Shadier night and ampler day;
April, sorrow unto sorrow,
Gave me unto mourning May;
Like a spirit, bending o'er me,
Woman seemed she, eve and morn,
Light in darkness, May that bore me
Watched the child that she had borne;
Soothed me with dim hands of healing,
Sleeping, till I dreamed again
Balmier daybreaks rosier stealing
On the heaving ocean-plain,
Past the tide-ways of the islands
To the dreamy-cadenced foam,
And the large out-looking highlands,
Pines and pastures of my home;
There beside me, parting never,

Over earth and sea and skies
Lights of beauty blown forever
Flamed and faded with my eyes;
Faint the music o'er my bosom —
"Sleep and dream, sleep and dream;
Waken, bud, and waken, blossom;
Feed him, lead him, flower and gleam!"
And at last, like music broken
With a great cry, came the light,
Loosed in tears my woe unspoken,
Lived, and brought the starless night.

XXXV

Nevada

My pulses tremble and start,
And flame in my throbbing heart;
And I would that the ocean-wind might arise
And blow the flying scud through the skies;
And I long for the spirit of cold
About my fever to flash and fold, —
And far away I see uplift,
Through the waver of thought and memory's drift,
Nevada peaks, where the heavenly rose
Sleeps in the bosom of summer snows:
Summer snows in their bosom lie,
And out of the heart of the tender sky,
Where all day long the lone sun rolled,
Blooms the death-rose in a mist of gold;
And with sudden pallor the faint flush goes,
And leaves the peaks to their white repose.

XXXVI

The Mighty Mother

O Mother, Mighty Mother, thou who bearest
The children of illusion and desire,
Lovers of all that to the heart is fairest,
Know'st thou not me, who now thine aid require,
And over all thy brood did most aspire
To love and to be loved? whom late thou gavest
To moulding time beside the sounding deep,
Bosomed with that wild passion which thou cravest,
And peril in my blood to dance and leap
And in my heart perpetual spring to keep;

But O, what kindless storm and winter woe
Hath laid the violets of the year asleep,
And bade my bursting blossoms never blow!
Am I not thine, O Mother? bend low, bend low!

O Mighty Mother, who with dark hands dippest
Thy children in this living glory's tide,
And in their infant gaze creation clippest
Blue-orbed in their young spirits azure-eyed,
And openest for their feet far-off the wide
Light-gateways! thou who hast the mighty magic
And layest thy sons in nature's foster-breast,
Where from the wells of being they drain the tragic

Nurture of spirits greatening o'er the rest,
And do themselves with that same power invest
With which the lone sun flames and blue seas roll,
Which stretches out the day from east to west,
And sows the vivid heavens from pole to pole,—
New wielders of the universal soul!

O Mother, who with hands of splendor blindest
The naked vision which thy sons adore,
And o'er them, face and hair and forehead, bindest
The mortal veil the sacred poets wore,
Bringing it forth from fame's eternal store;
And windest round them with sweet-tonéd measures

Its wandering woof of winds and waters
wove,
The poets' flowery joys and starry pleasures,
The marvel of the dreaming soul of
love, —
And heaven and earth in its enchant-
ment move;
Then see they spirits walking in the sky,
And mates of glory go the way they rove;
Across the world they see a great beam lie;
Nor deem it life to live, nor death to die.

If this were life, thou wouldst not hear
me crying;
If this were death, my mouth were stopt
with dust;
O Mighty Mother, far beyond replying,
Gone is the power that made me great
in trust;
I only cry aloud because I must,
For whom in heaven sang every star my
brother,

Sang every flower on earth in tune with me,
And light and sound, each sweeter than the other,
About my thoughts washed music like a sea,
Where long I voyaged with my minstrelsy;
They friend not now; nor see I, night nor day,
The landscape glorified with cloud or tree;
But waves of shadow through my senses play;
Along dark tides my spirit swoons away.

O, leave me not to drift through this blue being
Borne darkly as the dark wave bears the foam,
Sinking away, past touch, past sound, past seeing,
And further from divinest love to roam!

Not thus thou bringest the fair life-lovers home!
But rather past celestial skies that brighten
To the far shining of the heavenly rose,
Past congregated stars that blaze and lighten
Unto the Sun unseen whence all light flows,
The soul enamoured to its mystery goes!
Me darkness compasses, and starless woe;
Me living doth night's sepulchre enclose;
O yet, even now, might I thy presence know,
Though all were lost, thy child might victor go!

XXXVII

Autumn

Where summer bees were droning
  Half the moony night,
Like a poet's thoughts intoning
  Bliss of as brief delight,
Now autumn dirges sift
  The lindens yellowing old,
Wailing low the dying shrift
  Of love long told.

Autumn winds go moaning
  Through the boughs like amber bright;
Grinds the gray sea groaning
  On beaches wild and white;
The lonely lindens lift
  Their long-deserted gold;
Soon the black rain, the white drift,
  And the leaf in the mould.

XXXVIII

So Slow to Die

The rainbow on the ocean
A moment bright,
The nightingale's devotion
That dies on night,
Eve's rosy star a-tremble
Its hour of light, —
All things that love resemble
Too soon take flight.

The violets we cherish
Died in the spring;
Roses and lilies perish
In what they bring;
And joy and beauty wholly
With life depart;
But love leaves slow, how slowly!
Life's empty heart.

O, strange to me, and wondrous,
The storm passed by,
With sound of voices thundrous
Swept from the sky;
But stranger, love, thy fashion,—
O, tell me why
Art thou, dark storm of passion,
So slow to die?

As roll the billowy ridges
When the great gale has blown o'er;
As the long winter-dirges
From frozen branches pour;
As the whole sea's harsh December
Pounds on the pine-hung shore;
So will love's deep remember,
So will deep love deplore.

XXXIX

Eden Dirge

I HAVE been where the white lilies blow
That no heart ponders;
I have been where the rose-thickets grow,
And love never wanders;
Where the laurel-branch unbroken
Forgets the songful strife;
I have found this Death-in-life;
'Tis in Wild Eden!

There over the low lilied lawns,
Down rose-leaf alleys,
She moves under silent dawns
Through songless valleys;
Cold rose and snow-cold lilies
Shall for the maid be strewn,
Nor laurel for her moan;
'Tis in Wild Eden!

I have sent my songs up to her —
Sweetly youth left me;
I have given my manhood to woo her,
And of all bereft me;
And nightly I wake from the garden
That lieth remote, apart,
On the bourn of the hopeless heart; —
'Tis in Wild Eden.

XL

The Blood-red Blossom

"Whence comest thou, Child, when April wakes,
So phantom-fair through these green brakes?
Why wilt thou follow, fond and fain,
My footsteps to the wood again?

"Why, as I rest by this gray rock,
Do thy wet eyes the violets mock?
O, tell me why, in thy white bosom,
Thou ever wearest the blood-red blossom?"—

"Thou comest to watch the violets die,
And over early love to sigh;
Thou comest to watch the wild-rose waken,
And drop thy tears o'er love forsaken.

"And wouldst thou know why these three
years,
When April wakes, I rise in tears?
And wouldst thou know why in my bosom
I wear forever the blood-red blossom?

"'Twas here I grew, warm nature's child,
Too young to be by love beguiled;
I took the mantle of the spring
To be my infant covering.

"My heart was full of tender loves,
Soft as a dove-cote full of doves;
I brought the violets kisses true,
Warm as the sun and fresh as dew;

"Loved to-day and wished the morrow,
Went blue-eyed and knew no sorrow,
Dreaming what I saw, and seeing
What I dreamed, a gentle being;

"Seeing, dreaming, loving all,
What should such a child befall,

Save the sunshine, save the breeze
Blowing to the shining seas?

"O, fair I flowered in opening youth,
Too pure to doubt that love is truth;
I took the fragrance of the May
To be the sweetness of my clay.

"Came the spirit of Desire;
Came the finding of the lyre;
Came the night without repose;
Came the singing of the rose.

"I saw it open, fresh and fair,
And spread upon the country air;
I saw the shy bud swell apart,
And at the last give all its heart.

"I felt a tremor seize my breast,
And hopes unknown and unconfest;
I only knew some joy to be
By joy that then was dear to me.

"And down I knelt, and kissed it oft,
Kisses many, pure, and soft;
I thought — I was so childish wise —
God planted it in Paradise.

"O, blithe beneath the branch of June
My heart danced with the stars in tune;
And, throb on throb, deep nature's flood
Grew warm and gladdened in my blood.

"O, love began as Phosphor bright
Melts on the rosy breast of light;
O, love began as this wild wood
Quires with its red-throat multitude!

"I gave my body to sweet Desire;
I gave my soul to the shrill lyre;
And all night long, without repose,
I sang the beauty of the rose.

"And I forgot the violets dead,
And many a lily's golden head;

And I passed by all gentle flowers
Wherewith love decks his mortal bowers.

"My blood is faint, my cheeks are pale,
Since I began the deathless tale;
And thee I follow, fond and fain,
When to the wood thou goest again.

"By this gray rock I stand, a child;
My eyes are wet, my looks are wild;
I see a deep wound in thy breast,
And tears bedew thy secret rest.

"The wood shall wilt, the grass shall wither,
But with the spring will I come hither;
And when from all things here I fade,
With lovers dead shalt thou be laid.

"And now thou knowest why these three
years,
When April wakes, I rise in tears;
And now thou knowest why in my bosom
I wear forever the blood-red blossom."

XLI

Seaward

I WILL go down to the hoar sea's infinite
foam;
I will bathe in the winds of heaven; I will
nest where the white birds home;
Where the sheeted emerald glitters and
drifts with bursts of snow,
In the spume of stormy mornings, I will
make me ready and go;
Where under the clear west weather the
violet surge is rolled,
I will strike with the sun in heaven the
day-long league of gold;
Will mix with the waves, and mingle with
the bloom of the sunset bar,

And toss with the tangle of moonbeams, and call to the morning star;
And wave and wing shall know me a sea-child even as they,
Of the race of the great sea-farers a thousand years if a day.

For far in the dawn of England, by the gray Devonian shore
There dwelt a cluster of fishers who drew from the sea their store;
And aye as the morning mounted, they took the ocean's breath,
They shook out sail, they slipped away, they gave great odds to death;
In little scores they spoiled the seas, wherever helm could steer,
And grafting greatness through the world they planted England here;
Nor rested from sea-labor between the star-set poles, —

Two centuries their schooners plunged
over the Gorges' shoals;
And when the new world's morning un-
veiled earth's vaster face,
And God poured hence the flood-tides of
his many-fountained grace,
From Arctic to Antarctic, by either far-
flung Cape,
Wherever points the compass, the great sea-
roads they shape;
They cleave the Indian Ocean, they chart
the China Seas,
The coral-tusked Pacific they have van-
quished at their ease;
They haunt the Coast of Gold, they hang
on the Isles of Spice,
They have summered the Tropic Trades,
they have wintered the Polar ice;
And dropping home they anchored in the
quiet harbor-bars,
Who through the winds of all the world
had flung our shining stars.

Mine is this blood-red lineage, 'twixt the glories of birth and death,
That gave for the breath of my nostrils the salt sea-breath!
Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, soul of my soul,
To thee, man-nourishing Ocean, I come — make me whole!
I am weary in blood and nerve, weary in brain and limb,
Weary in sense and feeling, and the lights of life burn dim.
Ah, soon will the hill of the violets be mounded deep with snows;
A mist comes out of the lilies, and flame from the breath of the rose;
And all this marvellous beauty is a madness in my brain;
For ever my joyful being is dying — dying in pain;
Of the flush of the bough, of the fragrance of woods, of the moan of the dove

Weary — and weary of passion — and thrice,
thrice weary of love!

O, the bitter-sweet illusion of the seeming-
happy hours,
The pure thoughts, the sweet awe, the
darkness-budding bowers!
O, beautiful in noble hearts love's dawn-
sweet garden stands,
But the breath of one brief whisper shall
sow such hearts with sands!
O, fair in love's great ages, down the thou-
sand years of rhyme
Rings the tourney, shines the laurel of
the courtly time!
But here is haunting of houses where they
chatter of yea and nay,
Chatter of title and fortune, chatter the
heart away;
The lairs of social lies, the golden barter
base, —
Not to decline on these have I seen love
face to face!

I will rise, I will go from the places that
are dark with passion and pain,
From the sorrow-changéd woodlands and
a thousand memories slain.
O light gone out in darkness on the cliff
I seek no more
Where she I worshipped met me in her
girlhood at the door!
O, bright though years how many! fare-
well, sweet guiding star—
The wild wind blows me seaward over
the harbor-bar!
Better thy waste, gray Ocean, the homeless,
heaving plain,
Than to choke the fount of life and the
flower of honor stain!
I will seek thy blesséd shelter, deep bosom
of sun and storm,
From the fever and fret of the earth and
the things that debase and deform;
For I am thine; from of old thou didst
lay me, a child, at rest

In thy cradle of many waters, and gav'st
to my hunger thy breast;
Remember the dreamful boy whom thy
beauty preserved from wrong, —
Thou taughtest me music, O Singer of
the never-silent song!
Man-grown, I will seek thy healing; though
from worse than death I fly,
Not mine the heart of the craven, not
here I mean to die!
Let me taste on my lips thy salt, let me
live with the sun and the rain,
Let me lean to the rolling wave and feel
me man again!
O, make thee a sheaf of arrows as when
thy winters rage forth, —
Whiten me as thy deep-sea waves with the
blanching breath of the North!
O, take thee a bundle of spears from thine
azure of burning drouth,
Smite into my pulses the tremors, the
fervors, the blaze of the South!

So might my breath be snow-cold, and
my blood be pure like fire,
The heavenly souls that have left me will
come back to sustain and inspire.
Take me — I come — O, save me in the
paths my fathers trod! —
Then fling me back to the battle where
men labor the peace of God!

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